

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel Claims 45 to 49, 55 to 59 and 61 to 63 and amend the claims as shown below. The claims, as pending in the subject application, read as follows:

1. to 39. (Canceled)

40. (Currently Amended) A software distributing system for distributing control software used by an image forming apparatus to an external apparatus via a network, wherein the external apparatus is the image forming apparatus or an information processing apparatus connected with the image forming apparatus, said system comprising:

a receiving unit configured to receive production lot information of a consumable unit which is stored in a memory of [[a]] the consumable unit, wherein the consumable unit is detachably located in [[an]] the image forming apparatus and wherein the production lot information ~~which~~ is output by the external apparatus; and

a controller unit configured to distribute a control software, based on the production lot information, to the external apparatus via the network.

41. (Previously Presented) The software distributing system according to Claim 40, wherein the production lot information includes lots of respective parts making up the consumable unit, and wherein the controller unit is configured to select the control software based on a combination of lots of respective parts making up the

consumable unit and is configured to distribute the control software selected by the controller unit.

42. (Previously Presented) The software distributing system according to Claim 40, wherein the receiving unit is configured to receive operation information of the consumable unit, and further comprises a selecting unit configured to select a control software based on the production lot information and the operation information received by the receiving unit; and

wherein the controller unit is configured to distribute the control software selected by the selecting unit to the external apparatus.

43. (Previously Presented) The software distributing system according to Claim 40, wherein the production lot information indicates production condition for the consumable unit.

44. (Currently Amended) The software distributing system according to Claim 40, wherein the external apparatus is ~~the image forming apparatus or a computer~~ connected with the image forming apparatus.

45. to 49. (Canceled)

50. (Currently Amended) A information processing method for distributing control software used by an image forming apparatus to an external apparatus via a network, wherein the external apparatus is the image forming apparatus or an information processing apparatus connected with the image forming apparatus, said method comprising:

a receiving step which receives production lot information of a consumable unit which is stored in a memory of [[a]] the consumable unit, wherein the consumable unit is detachably located in [[an]] the image forming apparatus and which wherein the production lot information is output by the external apparatus; and

a controlling step which distributes a control software, based on the production lot information, to an external apparatus via the network.

51. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 50, wherein the production lot information includes lots of respective parts making up the consumable unit, and wherein the controlling step selects the control software based on a combination of lots of respective parts making up the consumable unit and distributes the control software selected by the controlling step.

52. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 50, wherein the receiving step receives operation information of the consumable unit, and further comprising a selecting step which selects a control software, based on the production lot information and the operation information received by the receiving step; and

wherein the controlling step distributes the control software selected by the selecting step to the external apparatus.

53. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 50, wherein the production lot information indicates production condition for the consumable unit.

54. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 50, wherein the external apparatus ~~is the image forming apparatus or~~ a computer connected with the image forming apparatus.

55. to 59. (Canceled)

60. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 50, wherein a computer-executable program stored on a computer-readable medium causes a computer to execute said information processing method.

61. to 63. (Canceled)